

## Economic development and cosmopolitical re-involvement: From necessity to sufficiency

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This text was written as a reply to a number of pronouncements made in 2008 by the then ‘Extraordinary Minister for Strategic Affairs’ of Brazil, the well-known political scientist R. Mangabeira Unger. At that moment, President Lula and his Chief of Staff, Dilma Rousseff, were manoeuvring to implement the aggressive anti-environmentalist policy of the ruling faction of the Workers’ Party. The main point then was to get the ‘Medida Provisória 422’, a.k.a ‘Medida da Grilagem’ (Landgrabbing Bill), approved by the Congress. This decree legalised the fraudulent (and almost always violent) appropriation of Amazonian public lands by big landowners and great agribusiness corporations. The highly publicised arrival of Mangabeira Unger – he was brought down from Harvard in order to give some sort of scientific legitimacy to this policy – was the final insult that forced Marina Silva, the Minister for the Environment, to quit the government. Dilma Rousseff was elected President in October 2010, running against Marina Silva and José Serra (the candidate of Fernando Henrique Cardoso’s Social Democracy Party).

*‘Whoever comes after will have to make do.’*

– Old Brazilian saying

### I

AS THE SYMBOL THAT the *physis* chose as one of its guises around last century’s end, Amazonia has now become an arena in which a decisive match is being played: the players involved, bringing together the micro- and macro-political in unprecedented ways, compete over the meaning of the future. Now, leaving behind the dialectics of State and Nature, these two imaginary totalities that have been

reciprocally constituted by a confrontation from which people and their myriad associations were always excluded (because they were either represented by the first, or identified with the second), a new geopolitics takes over. Exchanging the naturalisation of politics for the politicisation of nature, directly connecting the land to the Earth, thereby skipping over the old national territorialisations, the geopolitics of environmentalism refuses to entrust the State with the guardianship of the infinite and the monopoly on totalisation. Along with the State, Nature – a certain idea of Nature — must go down as well, ceasing to function as a sort of Ontological Supreme Court and opening itself to a symmetrical polivocal and multiple cosmopraxis. Geopolitics transmutes into cosmopolitics.

We could view things, of course, the other way around, seeing the old in the new. Environmentalist discourse may be read as the cosmology of late capitalism, a resacralisation of history and geography that would close the cycle opened by the expansion of the West in the 15th century; a dramatic reterritorialisation on a planetary scale of all those local, national and continental deterritorialisations that defined world history in the last centuries: the revenge of Totality. Environmentalism would thus mark the advent of a post-enlightenment Dark Age: leaving the space-time of the relations between society and supernature, the discourse of finitude and transcendence would now be articulated in the confrontation between society and nature. The Amazon rainforest would occupy, no longer merely allegorically, the place of the Gothic cathedral: the ‘sacred canopy’ which can now be admired on Google Earth, the *Hylea amazonica* would take on the shape of the Spirit. And Society, which not very long ago was the model of all order and of any Whole, would now see itself as disorder itself, as the suicidal hubris that can only redeem itself if it accepts its subordination to a totality that encompasses and determines it. The polis must defer to Gaia.

So perhaps environmentalism *can* be taken as a kind of repetition of Christianity – as both subverting and reinvesting (in the psychoanalytical sense), in the name of wider totalities and more concrete universals, the myopic imperial abstractions of our modern Romes – with Brazilians, incidentally, in the ambiguous role of barbarians to be converted by the missionaries of this neoreligion of the middle classes (a naturist replay of the old Protestant ethic); barbarians, on top of that, entrusted with the Amazonian Grail, inadvertent warrantors of planetary salvation.

Perhaps this is all true; but environmentalism can *also* be seen as a radically new discourse, which refuses some of the founding partitions and basic categories of so-called Western rationality. In particular, it rejects the idea that *Homo sapiens* is the species-elect of the universe – by divine gift or historical-evolutionary conquest – exclusively entitled to the condition of subject and agent before a nature

seen as object and patient, inert target of a Promethean praxis. It problematises the theologico-philosophical concept of 'production' as the last avatar of transcendence – the idea that the human produces against the nonhuman, an infinite movement of spiritualisation that opposes matter, production as separation from nature. In exchange, environmentalism proposes an internalisation of nature, a new immanence and a new materialism – a conviction that nature cannot be the name of what is 'out there', because there is neither outside nor inside.

If we understand nature that way, as a certain idea of the real, then nature designates the absolute limit of history. This is the predicament of our era: the planet has been saturated by the human, culture has become co-extensive with nature, ecology and anthropology, geophysics and geopolitics today coincide. A reaction against the enclosing of the global commons, environmentalism imposes a drastic revision of the paradigms of unending progress and perpetual development which continue to guide our economic doctrines and ideological pipe-dreams. Our linear and cumulative conception of history – structurally blind to structure, to systemic circularities and reverse causalities – took too long to wake up to the fact that misery, hunger and injustice are not the result of the still partial and incomplete character of the march of progress, but two of its necessary by-products, which increase as the march continues to move in the same direction. The Third and Fourth Worlds already are, because they always were, part of the First World, and they are everywhere. We went through the 20th century with the mind of the 19th century; the future is at our gates, and it promises to be hard for everyone.

As a matter of fact, the future seems to have already arrived. The anthropological project, in the wide sense of the expression, is in deep crisis. The famous theses on 'the end of history' and 'the last man' that Fukuyama (1992) recycled from Hegel and Nietzsche via Kojève have now ominously moved from the metaphysical to the physical planet; the end of history and the last man are now mere empirical questions that concern climatologists and geophysicists: how much hotter the world needs to get, how many degrees up are required to produce the last man? Humans are no longer confident that they are the God-chosen species made to rule the Earth. Or perhaps they have started to realise that they may have been chosen, not by God, but by the Devil, and to destroy, not to increase, life on the planet – at least the kind of life, and of living beings, they cherish the most. The 'posthumanist turn' in anthropology, which includes things apparently as diverse as the so-called animal, ontological and speculative 'turns' – not to mention Deep Ecology and related movements – is a telling sign of this. Let us take the 'animal turn' as our example. It is obviously a turning *away* from the human in the sense of a turning *towards* the animal to see whether we can find in animality – in our shared animality with the other animal species – a better way of being human, or

better, a way of getting away from the human in search of a better way to be, and stay, alive. You certainly recall Heidegger's notorious distinction between things like stones, which are worldless, animals, which are 'poor in world', and humans, who are 'rich in world' or 'world-forming' (Heidegger 1929/1995). Now that we are starting to see ourselves as having quite irresponsibly squandered our world's riches, we humbly search and comb the lives of poor to see if they can teach us how to live with more modest means. Being no longer proud of being human, we seem to be willing to extend much of our jealously guarded humanity to other species. (Of course, the more widely we extend the concept, the thinner it becomes intentionally, while it slowly mutates into something else. Animals are but one of the intercessors in this process.) Let us not forget, however, that such an extension is simply the re-establishment of a former situation, for what defines modernity is precisely the restriction of that concept of humanity, particularly in terms of its moral import:

Ecological morality is always approached as if it were a matter of authorizing or prohibiting an extension of the moral category to new beings (animals, rivers, glaciers, oceans), whereas exactly the opposite is the case. What we should find amazing are the strange operations whereby we have constantly restricted the list of beings to whose appeal we should have been able to respond. From this point of view, there is nothing less 'natural' than philosophical modernism. (Hache & Latour 2010: 325)

This citation, among other things, reminds us that animal rights are a small, albeit strategically important, part of a much wider recent tendency to grant rights to 'Nature' at large (see the new Constitutions of Ecuador and Bolivia; for once, those poor nations are at the cutting edge of human meta-culture) – which is tantamount to ascribing *duties* to humanity. Animal rights are one of the reciprocals of the new human duties.

But there is more than animal suffering at stake. There is, for instance, the question of rethinking the whole notion of 'rights' as the default mode of codifying intrahuman relationality, or of ontologising sociality, or of expressing ethical commitment. Is there not another way of schematising universal relationality – the link between all creatures insofar as they belong to the same plane of earthly, material immanence – is there not another way to conceive of the Relation except in terms of rights and duties? To *respond* to other beings, in other words, to become *responsible* before them, is not necessarily expressed in a bill of rights. What other modes of existence, to evoke Latour's coming metaphysics (Latour 2011), should be mobilised to cope with other beings, other *existants*, with animals being just the first – the closest, in many senses – candidates for relational redefinition?

## II

The diversity of the forms of life on Earth is consubstantial with life as a form, or mode, of matter. This diversity is the very movement of life as information, a form-taking process that interiorises difference – the variations of potential existing in a universe constituted by the heterogeneous distribution of matter-energy – to produce more difference, that is, more information. Life, in this sense, is an exponentialisation, a redoubling or multiplication of difference by itself. This applies equally to human life. The diversity of ways of human life is a diversity in the ways of relating to life in general, and to the innumerable singular forms of life that occupy (inform) all of the possible niches of this world. Human diversity, social and cultural, is a manifestation of environmental, or natural, diversity – it constitutes us as a singular form of life, being our own mode of interiorising ‘external’ (environmental) diversity and therefore of reproducing it. For this reason the present environmental crisis is, for humans, a cultural crisis, a crisis of diversity, and a threat to human life.

The crisis sets in as soon as we lose sight of the relative, reversible and recursive character of the distinction between ‘environment’ and ‘society’. Paul Valéry stated in the sombre aftermath of the First World War, ‘We, European Civilizations, now know that we are mortal’ (Valéry 1957/1919: 988). In this somewhat crepuscular beginning of the present century, we have come to know that, beyond being mortal, ‘our civilisations’ are lethal, and lethal not only for us, but for an incalculable number of living species – including our own. We, modern humans, children or stepchildren of the mortal civilisations of Valéry, appear to have forgotten that we belong to life, and not the contrary. Once we knew this. A few other remaining civilisations appear to know this still. Many more, some of which we have already killed, knew this only too well. But today, it has begun to be glaringly obvious even for ‘us’ that it is in the supreme and urgent interest of the human species to abandon an anthropocentric perspective. If the demand seems paradoxical, that is because indeed it is; such is our present condition. But not all paradox implies an impossibility; the paths that our civilisation has taken have not been at all necessary, from the point of view of the human species. It is possible to change direction, even though this means changing much of what many people would consider to be the very essence of our civilisation. Our curious way of saying ‘us’, for example, excluding ourselves from the ‘environment’.

What we call environment is a society of societies, what we call society is an environment of environments. What is ‘environment’ for one society will be ‘society’ for another environment, and so forth. Ecology is sociology, and vice versa. As the great ecologist Gabriel Tarde said, ‘Every thing is a society, every phenomenon is a social fact’ (Tarde 1999/1893: 58). All diversity is both a social and an environmental

fact; it is impossible to separate them without falling into the gap thus opened up and destroying the very conditions of our existence.

Diversity is, therefore, a superior value for life. Life lives off difference; every time that a difference disappears, there is death. 'To exist is to differ,' continued Tarde, 'it is diversity, not unity, which is at the heart of things' (1999/1893: 72–73). In this way, it is the very idea of value, the value of all value, so to speak – the heart of reality – which supposes and affirms diversity.

It is true that the death of some is the life of others and that, in this sense, the differences that form the irreducible condition of the world never really annul themselves, they merely 'change place' (the principle of the conservation of energy). But not all places are equally good for us humans. Not all places have the same value. (Ecology is nothing but this: the evaluation of place.) Socioenvironmental diversity is the condition of a rich life, a life capable of articulating the greatest number of significant differences. Life, value and meaning, finally, are the three names, or effects, of difference.

To speak of socioenvironmental diversity is not merely to affirm a truth; it is a call to arms. It is not about celebrating or lamenting a foregone diversity, residually maintained or irretrievably lost – an already differentiated difference, static, sedimented in separated identities and ready for consumption. We know how socioenvironmental diversity, taken as mere variety in the world, can be used to substitute mock differences for true differences – narcissistic distinctions that repeat to infinity the apathetic identity of consumers, who become ever more similar the more they imagine themselves to 'be different'.

But the arrow of real diversity points to the future, to a differentiating difference, to a becoming which goes beyond the plural (a simple variety subsumed by some superior unity) towards the multiple (a complex variation that resists totalisation). Socioenvironmental diversity is to be produced, promoted, favoured. It is not a question of preservation, but of perseverance. It is not a problem of technological control, but of political self-determination.

### III

These days Brazil wallows in dreams of imminent grandeur. Contrary to the millenarianism disseminated in my country – 'Our turn has arrived!' (our turn for what, exactly?) – I am convinced that it is urgent, not to 'stop to think', but to think so as not to stop; it is urgent to begin to think carefully so as not to stop altogether. We need to learn to de-grow so that we don't decay. Brazil is a big country, as a local saying goes; yes, Brazil is big, but it's a small world. At the dawn of this century the Earth is not at its best. The global patterns of production, distribution and consumption of energy by our species are acutely unsustainable. My country is

one of the few that still has full viability from the point of view of its resource base. Brazil boasts, historically and culturally, one of the most diversified populations in the world: 220 indigenous groups and immense numbers of African descendants, European and Asian immigrants, Arabs and Jews; rural and urban people of the most different ethnic and cultural origins living in a variety of natural formations that, in turn, are home to the richest biodiversity on the planet. Sociodiversity and biodiversity should be our major assets. But here we are, as always, insisting on sawing off the branch on which we sit, with policies of international trade that apply a model of development that is ecologically predatory, economically concentrating, socially impoverishing and culturally alienating. We have devastated more than half of our country in the belief that it was necessary to leave nature to enter history; now look how history, with its customary predilection for irony, demands that we make that very nature our passport. I am afraid we will be found wanting.

#### IV

Contrary to what the Extraordinary Minister for Strategic Affairs, Roberto Mangabeira Unger, said in a recent interview, Amazonia is not a 'collection of trees'.<sup>2</sup> Collections of trees exist in botanical gardens or on the estates of the super-rich. Amazonia is an ecosystem, a multiplicity composed of very conspicuous trees as well as innumerable other living species – including human beings, who have been there for at least 15 thousand years.<sup>3</sup>

Amazonia was never devoid of people before the European invasion; on the contrary, its demographic nadir was reached after the invasion, with its epidemics, its methodical massacres, and with its forced 'descents' of native populations for concentration around mission stations and commercial outposts. And the indigenous populations, throughout these millennia of co-adaptation with the Amazonian ecosystem (or ecosystems – as Amazonia has many, not only one), found solutions of 'sustainability' that are infinitely superior to the truculent and myopic processes of deforestation with herbicides, chainsaws, bulldozers and so forth.

The Amazonian rainforest was always populated. The majority of the useful species of the forest owe their dissemination to indigenous land use techniques: Amazonia is a cultural forest, an anthropic entity. So it was never, or at least not for many centuries, millennia perhaps, 'virgin forest'. However, it does not follow from the fact that the forest is no longer virgin that it is legitimate to rape it. Yet that is exactly what is being done.

Amazonia is suffering a violent process of aggression. I say Amazonia, not the so-called collection of trees; Amazonia in its entirety, its traditional populations and their myriad living species. Rather than simply initiating northern European development models, an alternative model which puts the largest forest in

the world at the centre of the equation is called for, since we have arrived at a moment in the history of the planet in which life is the value that is in crisis – both human and nonhuman life. It is no longer possible to practise politics without considering the space in which all real politics unfolds, the space of terrestrial immanence.

I use the word immanence deliberately here. Minister Mangabeira Unger said in a recent interview that the destiny of Man is to be ‘grand, divine; it is not to be a child imprisoned in a green paradise’; and that ‘all people [*peessoas*, persons] are spirits who strive to transcend’.<sup>4</sup> Well, Amazonian Indians would agree with the minister that all people are spirits; perhaps they would not agree with the idea that only human beings are people or persons, but that is another problem. Certainly, however, they would not agree with the idea that all people ‘strive to transcend’. This is an affirmation that would sound, to indigenous ears, distressingly similar to that which they have been hearing during the five centuries since the arrival of the Europeans – the affirmation that they *are* children who need to bow to the divine message of transcendence in order to become full human beings, to wit, to be good Christian citizens (i.e. with plenty of faith and no land at all).

Indians are not ‘imprisoned in a green paradise’, as the minister said. Amazonia is not a God-given paradise; on the contrary, it is a laborious co-adaptive construction, a system in dynamic equilibrium produced by the synergistic interaction of human (indigenous) technical ingenuity and the *sui generis* ingenuities of the sundry organisms that live there. The idea that Paradise is, at bottom, a prison for ‘Man’ has a long history in Western thought. Both notions, however – that of Paradise as well as that of prison – belong in the Old World. Amerindians have nothing to do with them. Take them out of the conceptual prison in which you have locked them, Minister. And let us leave Paradise for those who need it.

The idea that indigenous populations need to be ‘liberated’, which Mangabeira Unger expounded in another, more recent text, seems to me to be metaphysically insolent.<sup>5</sup> Those indigenous groups who suffer from depression, suicide, alcoholism, as the minister laments, are precisely those who do not have land – the Guarani of Southern Mato Grosso, for example – and not Amazonian groups like the Yanomami, a strong and happy people, precisely for having land that fits their vital and spiritual needs. The indigenous areas of Amazonia are the least deforested areas of the whole region; and they are the essential components in the process of regularisation or juridical stabilisation of the chaotic land distribution that made Amazonia into a paradise of illegal land appropriation, political assassination, drug trafficking, international smuggling and government-subsidised corruption. And what does the ministry propose? A ‘programme of landowning regularisation’ that is nothing but a repeat of the loathsome principle of *Uti possidetis*: the legalisation of the private, brute-force appropriation of public lands by the rich and the powerful.



Naturally, Amerindians suffer from various problems, many of them caused by the incompetence and/or corruption of the agencies of the state that should enforce the respect of their constitutional rights. But it can also not be denied that the Amerindians have suffered other difficulties adapting to the socioeconomic (and spiritual) forms of Brazilian national society, because they have chosen from very early on in history a civilisational route that is radically distinct from our own – one which can be called the path of immanence as opposed to the path of transcendence.

Indigenous cultures are not founded on the principle that the essence of the human condition is desire, need, and lack. Their mode of life, their 'system', in the most radical sense, is other. Amerindians are the masters of immanence. What transcendence do we have, proud Brazilians, the self-appointed representatives of Reason and Modernity, to offer them? It is more probable that the Amerindians will liberate us than that we will liberate them. At least in spirit.

## V

The problem, in sum, is that of finding an alternative way of life, because there is no alternative to life. To change the life we live – to change the way of life; to change the 'system'. Capitalism is a politicoreligious system, the principle of which consists of taking from people what they have and making them want what they don't have – always and ever. Another name for this principle is 'economic development'. We are here right in the thick of the theology of the Fall, of the infinite insatiability of human desires before the finite means of satisfying them (see Sahlin 2000). The economists are the priests and the theologians of our age. It is not by accident that Marx spoke of the metaphysical subtleties and of the theological astuteness involved in the idea of commodity. But it is precisely this theology of development that we can no longer accept, or at least we can no longer accept the equation between development and economic 'growth'. The world of economics is paying renewed attention to the theses of Georgescu-Roegen and his disciples on de-growth, the thermodynamic costs of the economy, and the idea that there exists an uneconomic growth which occurs 'when increases in production come at an expense in resources and wellbeing that is worth more than the items made':

Environmental degradation is an iatrogenic disease induced by economic physicians (pro-growth advocates) who treat the basic malady of unlimited wants by prescribing unlimited economic growth. We experience environmental degradation in the form of increased scarcity of clean air, pure water, relaxed moments etc. But the only way the growthmania paradigm knows to deal with scarcity is to recommend growth. Yet one certainly does

not cure a treatment-induced disease by increasing the treatment dosage!  
(Daly 2004/1973: 49)

The notion of 'sustainable development' is merely a means of making the notion of development sustainable, although it really should have already been sent to the idea-recycling plant. There is no such thing as a sustainable *capitalist* economy; but unless I am much mistaken, the majority of those who strive for a sustainable way of life cannot even imagine an alternative to capitalism.

To counter *economic* development, we must generate a concept of *anthropological* sufficiency. Anthropological sufficiency does not mean absolute self-sufficiency ('sustainability'), given that life is difference, is relation with alterity, is openness to an outside in view of its perpetual interiorisation, an interiorisation that is always unfinished (the outside maintains us, we are the outside, we differ from ourselves at every moment). What is in question is self-determination, the capacity to define for ourselves a *good enough life*, as Winnicott spoke of a 'good enough mother'. We do not need paradise, or the perfect mother; the 'good life' is a good *enough* life. There is no better than enough.

Development is always deemed an anthropological necessity because it supposes an anthropology of necessity: the subjective infinitude of 'Man' (his insatiable desires) is in indissoluble contradiction with the objective finitude of the environment (the scarcity of resources). We are at the heart of the theological economy of the West; we are at the source of our economic theology of development. It was Walter Benjamin who famously remarked that capitalism is a religion – not the result of a religious mutation (as in Weber's classic thesis), but a mutation of Christianity, its transformation into capitalism itself (Benjamin 1996/1921). And as Sahlins also famously said, the genesis of Economics was the economics of Genesis (Sahlins 2000).

However, this economicotheological concept of necessity is, in every sense, unnecessary, by which I mean, dangerous to the point of being suicidal. Against the theology of necessity should be put forward a pragmatic of sufficiency. Against the acceleration of growth, the acceleration of transfers of wealth, or the free circulation of differences; against the economocist theory of necessary development, let us devise a cosmopragmatics of sufficient action. Against the world of 'everything is necessary, nothing is enough', let us favour a world where very little is necessary, almost everything is enough. Who knows, maybe with these strategies we will end up with a world to leave to our children.

I end with three conclusions. Firstly, on a pessimist-fantast note, by saying that I have my doubts that we can escape the ecological crisis created by capitalism simply by means of the exercise of scientific reason and political will. I have therefore come to suppose that only a religious movement, a posthuman utterly non-messianic utopia, biocentric and geomorphic, can perhaps modify the

conditions of our existence in a meaningful way. It would be a matter, then, of shaking the religious foundations of Western culture, and perhaps even of human culture. Humans must mutate into another species to forestall their own extinction. Christianity was a radical innovation within the anthropological matrix, it redefined certain basic values of human society. Christ was an anthropological Messiah. Perhaps the imminent *parousia* will bring us a different Christ: a physical Christ, a thermodynamic Messiah (this is a prediction – of sorts! – not a prescription of any sort). An Artificial Intelligence, maybe? But of course, messiahs are not made to order. I think it was Kafka who said the Messiah will come only when he is no longer necessary. Soon he will no longer be necessary.

Secondly, another pessimist-fantast conclusion. Imagine one of those science fiction B-movies in which the Earth has been invaded by aliens who manage to disguise themselves as humans in order to dominate the planet and plunder its resources (because their natal world has been exhausted). Usually, those aliens feed off humans themselves: their bodies, their mental energy, something like that. Now, let us imagine we are in such a movie, but with the difference that the invasion has already happened. Imagine the aliens are, in truth, ourselves. We were invaded by an alien race disguised as human, and it so turned out that they have won: we are them. Or are there two species of humans, perhaps? One alien, the other indigenous? Or maybe there is only one species, but it is internally divided, an alien mind sharing the same body with an indigenous one? Let us say a slight glitch in our behaviour makes ‘us’ realise that we are actually two individuals, and we cannot tell who is the one who is realising it. Or maybe the invader is the soul, the native is the body. (William Burroughs told us that ‘language is a virus from outer space’; maybe the whole soul is.) We would all be natives; we would all be like the Amerindian peoples colonised by the European invaders. All of us humans – Europeans in the first place, of course; Europe was the first continent that was invaded.

We seem to have woken up into an incomprehensible nightmare.

But let us finish on a more lighthearted note. In the conclusion to their beautiful paper ‘Morality of moralism? An exercise in sensitization’, Emilie Hache and Bruno Latour leave the animal question and move to a far more remote type of being. They recall a striking meditation by Michel Serres on the myth of Sisyphus: ‘Everyone talks about Sisyphus, [Serres] points out, and no one says anything about the rock! “The myth shows the continual fall of the rock,” yet we notice only “the guilty, unhappy hero working like a slave”’ (Hache & Latour 2010: 319).

Indeed – *what about the rock?* If you think rocks do not count, I would like to leave you with this amusing (even if it may be a hoax) theological debate between two churches somewhere in the American Deep South or Midwest, one Presbyterian, the other Catholic. They stood opposite each other on the same street.





Source: <http://tithenai.tumblr.com/post/3215186237/two-churches-located-across-the-street-from-each-other> (accessed 24 June 2011)

Panpsychism. That's what we should be moving to. Animals are just the first step. We'll get to the rocks eventually.

## Notes

- 1 'Quem vier depois, que se arranje', epigraph in Dean (1997).
- 2 Unger RM, Mangabeira defende pecuária intensiva em áreas devastadas, *Folha de São Paulo*, 21 May 2008. Actually, Unger said that Amazonia was 'more than a collection of trees; it has people in it' – people who needed state-sponsored development brought to the region, of course. So Amazonia is, according to the minister, a collection of trees + a number of human subjects of the State.
- 3 Amazonian rainforest is a rhizomatic assemblage – let us recall that trees in the Amazon region have relatively shallow roots, supporting themselves mostly thanks to their intricately interlocked superficial radicular system as well as by their enormous buttresses, and feeding to a substantial extent off their decaying matter; rather than growing in the soil, they grow their own soil.
- 4 Unger RM, Mangabeira defende pecuária intensiva em áreas devastadas, *Folha de São Paulo*, 21 May 2008.
- 5 Unger RM, A Amazônia não é só assunto der ambientalistas, *O Globo*, 27 May 2008.



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